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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- ◆ Iraqi Foreign Minister, in letter to President of Security Council, says Iraq agrees to comply fully with resolution 660 (1990). Calls for resolution providing for immediate cease-fire.
- ◆ Secretary-General says he is extremely pleased to see Kuwait City free from foreign occupation.
- ◆ Security Council holds consultations to consider recommendation by Secretary-General to end mandate of United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group.
- ◆ Meeting on Gulf oil spill emergency convenes in Bahrain.
- ◆ Population Commission hears call for world-wide action to deal with diverse demographic problems.

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The Permanent Representative of Iraq, Abdul Amir A. Al-Anbari, delivered at noon today a letter from the Iraqi Foreign Minister to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General saying that Iraq had decided to accept and implement Council resolutions 660 (1990), 662 (1990) and 674 (1990) (condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, declaring null and void the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait and the situation of third-State nationals in Kuwait and Iraq, respectively) if the Council would adopt a resolution providing for an immediate cease-fire.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, said in the letter that the Iraqi armed forces had started to withdraw to the positions they were in prior to 1 August 1990 and that he hoped the withdrawal would be fully completed within the next few hours, notwithstanding the continued attacks by American and other forces during that process.

In a second letter, issued later this afternoon, the Iraqi Foreign Minister said that despite the Iraqi withdrawal at dawn, local time, the coalition forces continued to attack Iraqi forces during their withdrawal.

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Speaking to correspondents before he went to see the Council President, Simbarashe Mumbengegwi of Zimbabwe, the Iraqi Ambassador said he hoped the Council would issue a resolution calling for a cease-fire and an end to all hostilities.

The Council held consultations this afternoon on the issue. However, no formal meeting was expected.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said this morning that he was extremely pleased to see Kuwait City free from foreign occupation, and that he had called the Kuwaiti Ambassador this morning to congratulate him.

He made the comments in reply to correspondents' questions as he entered the building. The Secretary-General also said he had not heard any news about a Security Council meeting at the ministerial level to deal with the settlement of the crisis. When asked if he thought there would be a political solution at this point, or only a military solution, he replied that the only thing he was interested in was a solution which was fair, just, in the framework of the United Nations resolutions, but still could avoid any future bloodshed.

The Security Council was scheduled to hold consultations this afternoon to consider a recommendation by the Secretary-General to bring to an end the mandate of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group -- known as UNIIMOG.

The Group has been stationed on the border between the two countries since August 1988 to monitor the internationally recognized boundaries.

The Secretary-General said in a report to the Council that the withdrawal of the two sides' forces to the internationally recognized boundaries had at last been completed as described in the 1975 Treaty concerning the State Frontier and Neighbourly Relations between Iran and Iraq.

The Secretary-General said there was still a remaining question about establishing an area of separation and an area of limitation of armaments, which could help to reduce tension and build confidence between the parties. It had been hoped, he said, that UNIIMOG could play a role in the establishment of such an area. However, the Iranian side had informed UNIIMOG that it did not request its assistance during this process.

A three-day meeting on measures to deal with the Persian Gulf oil spill began in Bahrain yesterday.

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The meeting was convened on the initiative of Badria Al-Awadi, technical and administrative co-ordinator of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, in co-operation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) -- the United Nations agency concerned with maritime safety and the prevention of marine pollution.

Latest estimates of the oil spill by the President of Saudi Arabia's Meteorological and Environmental Protection Association, Abulbar Al-Gain, range from 500,000 to 3 million barrels. Analysis of aerial remote-sensing data has suggested an estimate of 2 million barrels.

The Bahrain meeting is discussing current clean-up activities, including the protection of sensitive sites in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar. Apart from the immediate crisis, it is also dealing with long-term planning, including such measures as contingency planning, equipment requirements, co-ordination by regional States and international assistance.

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The Population Commission began its biennial session at Headquarters this morning with calls for world-wide action to deal with the increasingly diverse demographic problems nations will face in the coming decades.

Opening the meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, Rafeeuddin Ahmed, said the guidance of the Commission would be sought on the priority issues to be considered by the 1994 International Meeting on Population. Those issues included population growth, its relation to environment and development, international migration, population redistribution within countries, population and the status of women and population policies and programmes.

Also addressing the meeting, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Nafis Sadik, stressed the need to confront numerous population issues and challenges, given the unprecedented pace at which global population was increasing.

The Director of the Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA), Shunichi Inoue, said massive geographical movements of people were now causing political, economic and social instability. With the diverse population trends in different parts of the world, international migration was likely to become one of many highly sensitive and potentially explosive demographic issues.

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